

A  
CHARACTER  
OF  
COFFEE  
AND  
Coffee-Houses.

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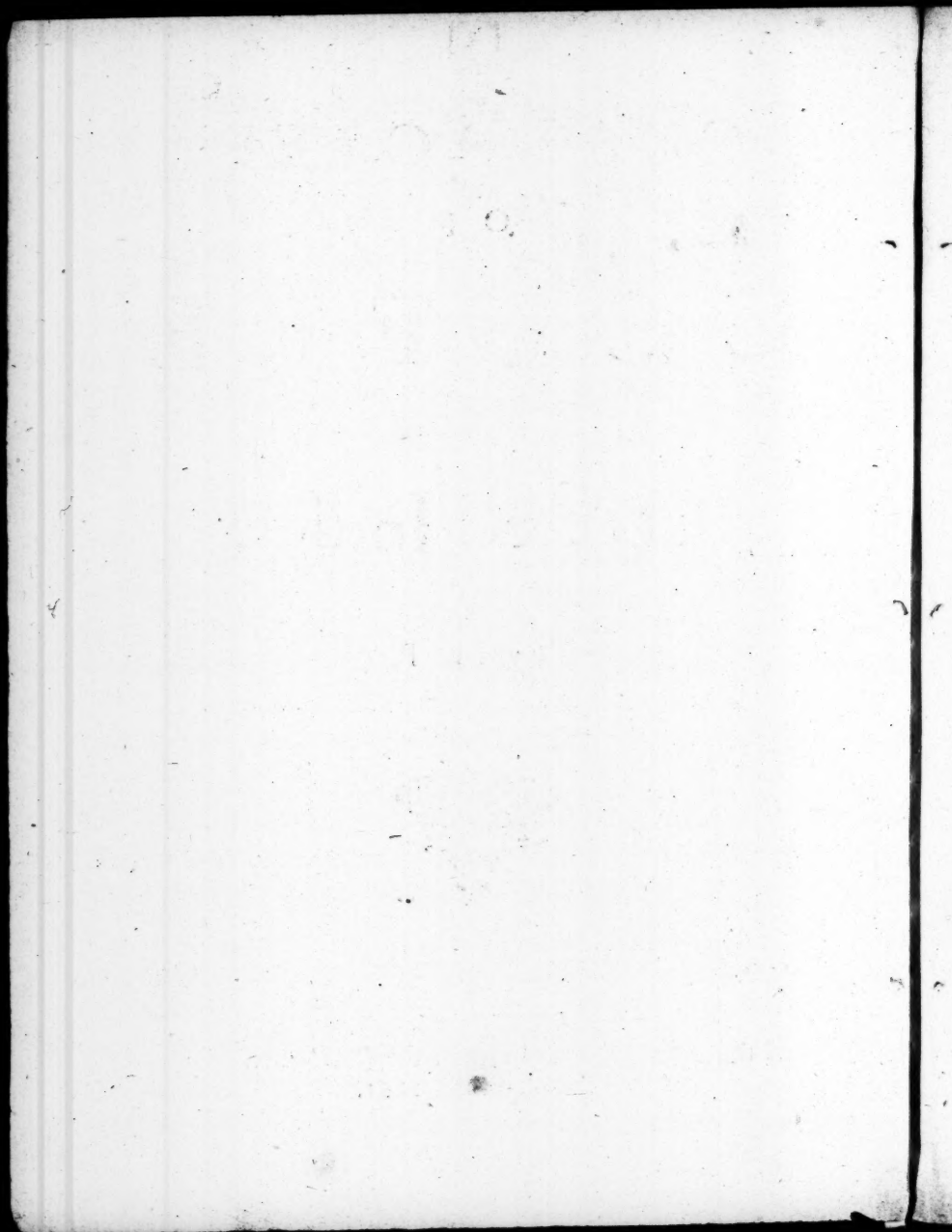
By M. P.

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A  
 CHARACTER  
 OF  
 COFFEE  
 AND  
 COFFEE-HOUSES.

**A** Coffee-house is free to all Comers, so they have Humane shape, where a Liquor made of an *Arabian* Berry called *Coffee* is drunk. Six or seven years ago was it first brought into *England*, when the Palats of the English were as Fanatical, as their Brains. Like Apes, the English imitate all other people in their ridiculous Fashions. As Slaves they submit to the Customes even of *Turky* and *India*. Doth the French-man wear Feathers in his Hat, and Pantaloons to hide his straddling? Believe it, the English-man will be *a la mode de France*. With the Barbarous *Indian* he smoaks Tobacco. With the *Turk* he drinks Coffee.

Herb.  
with some  
little alte-  
ring.

*The English-man, might he himself misplace,  
Sure to be crosse, would shift both feet and face.*

2. These capricious Islanders, of the Hop, Malt, Cock, China, Rash-berry, and other ingredients, make and swallow as many and as various sorts of Drink, as they amongst them have Sects and Opinions. They drink as much Canary, as its native Countrey produceth. 'Tis said, they devour down a greater quantity of Wine, (called Canary) than the *Canaries* afford. All Countries send in hither their several sorts of Wine and other Liquors. This variety of drink satisfies not the voraginous Palat of the English. Even the Deserts of *Arabia* are ransackt for a Berry, which made into a drink, is as thick as puddle-water, and so ugly in colour and tast, that Poets hereafter will undoubtedly choose it, as the best resemblance to describe the *Stygian* Lake by. Oh Heavens, how do the English Palats differ from those of more sober Nations? These preserve Snow to temper their Liquor with, those gulch down Coffee even boyling in the Dish, more eagerly, than an almost starved Dog doth lick up Pottage, just then taken from the fierce fire. In time (sure) the English-man will swallow down burning Coals.

3. Coffee is a Dryer, and therefore with successe is drunk by those Gentlemen, who are infected with the French-pox, which is now become the Characteristal difference between the plumed Nobles and the high-noon. Alas, Vertue is a pedantical and vulgar quality.

4. 'Tis extolled for drying up the Crudities of the Stomack, and for expelling Fumes out of the Head. Excellent Berry! which can cleanse the English-man's Stomack

Stomak of Flegm, and expel Giddinesse out of his Head. Yet it is certain, that for the small space of an hour or thereabouts it hath expelled out of an English head and Stomack these infirmities. But after such a little interval, they return again. And the house being thus swept and cleansed, seven Devils enter it. For Physicians say, that Coffee causeth the *Meagrim* and other Giddinesses in the Head, &c. Of this daily experiment may be made: For if you set Short-hand-writers to take down the Discourse of the Company, who prattle over Coffee, it will be evident on reading the Notes, that the talk is extravagant and exactly like that of the Academians of Bedlam, and such, as any others, would be ashamed of, but themselves.

5. Coffee makes no man drunk. But for this, it is no more to be commended, than a Neates-tongue, a dish of Anchovaes, or a salt Bit, which never yet intoxicated any man. For Coffee being mixt with the more drying smoak of Tobacco makes too many run to the Tavern or Ale-house to quench their thirst, which they cannot satisfy, till out of their gorged stomachs, they send up rich sacrifices to *Liber Pater*.

6. This forein Liquor in truth qualifies the Vapours of Wine, which makes your Good Fellows resort thither to heat their Stomacks made cold and infirm by their having powred therein too too much Wine, and thus they inable their weak Stomacks to receive a new Load. But hereby in part may be made a Judgment of the good Company of this place. O Heavens! how well will the Barrels of Herings (imposed on these houses) agree with Coffee.

7. Coffee being dry, in proportion, dries up the Radical

cal moisture. By constant use thereof, a man becomes,

— *ad unum*

*Mollis opus* —

The other Sex hath just cause to curse the day, in which it was brought into *England*; Had Women any sense or spirit, they would remonstrate to his Majestie, that Men in former times were more able, than now, They had stronger Backs, and were more Benevolent, so that *Hercules* in one night got fifty Women with Child, and a Prince of *Spain* was forc'd to make an Edict, that the Men should not repeat the act of Coition above nine times in a night, for before that Edict, belike Men did exceed that proportion; That in this Age, Men drink so many Spirits and Essences, so much Strong-water, so many several sorts of Wine, such abundance of Tobacco, and (now at last) pernicious Coffee, that they are grown as impotent as Age, as dry and as unfruitful, as the Deserts of *Africk*. Having remonstrated this, they then would (were they wise) petition his Majesty to forbid Men the drinking of effeminating Coffee, and to command them instead thereof to drink delicious Chocolate.

8. 'Tis the Interest also of Women to have this drink damn'd, lest the Men bereave them of one of their most excellent and appropriated Qualities, that is Garrulity and Talkativeness. In this Age Men tattle more than Women, and particularly at the Coffee-house, when the number hath been but six, five of them have talkt at one time. The Company here have out-talk'd an equal number of Gossiping Women, and made a greater noise than a Bake-house. Men are here born down by clamour, which resembles at times the noise of the Cataracts of *Nilus*, but alwayes resembles a School, fill'd with Children, every one conning his Lesson aloud.

9. Here

9. Here Men carried by instinct sipp muddy water, and like Frogs confusedly murmur Insignificant Notes, which tickle their own ears, and to their inharmonious sense, make Musick of jarring strings. *Hic fluxus Verborum, vix gutta Menis.*

10. In this confused way of gabbling the Coffee-drinkers fondly imagine, that they make a better Consort, than four and twenty Violins. They run from point to point, from one subject to another, as insensibly and as swiftly, as *Polewheel* runs division on the Base Viol.

11. The day sufficeth not some Persons to drink 3. or 4 dishes of Coffee in. They borrow of the night, though they are sure, that this drink taken so late, will not let them close their Eyes all night. These men are either afraid to be alone with themselves, or they to excess love Company, so that they never set apart any time to converse with themselves. This ill-tasted Liquor (by what charms I know not) makes Men to neglect and forsake themselves; for

*who cannot rest, till he good Fellows find,  
He breaks up house, turns out of dores his mind.*

*Herb.*

12. At this place a man is cheated of what is, by far more valuable than Money, that is, Time. A constant Companion of this House going in all haste for a Midwife, or to save the life of a Friend then dying, must call in, and drink at least his two dishes of Coffee and his two Pipes of Tobacco. And which is yet more wonderful, many persons prefer Coffee, (and the Company, which love it) before the gain of money, for many men neglect their Callings and Vocation, to tattle away their time over two or three dishes of Coffee.

13. Here is no respect of persons. Boldy therefore let any person, who comes to drink Coffee sit down in the very  
*Chair*



*Chair*, for here a Seat is to be given to no man. That great privilege of *equality* is only peculiar to the *Golden Age*, and to a *Coffee-house*. However even here, a small portion of *Wit*, gilded over with an *Estate*, hath an influence. Money ! *Thou art the Man, and Man but Dross to thee*. Or with *Jure-nal* I may say,

---O nummi vobis hunc præstat honorem

*Vos estis fratres*-----

So also is it here in respect of *Titles*; Children do not more for a time value their *Babies*, than *Titles* are for a while here gazed on. Even a ----- as such, gains as good an opinion as the place is capable of. *Light-things* weigh much in those *Scales*, which are here used, *Heavy*, little or nothing. *Wisdom* and *Vertue* are every where used, as *fanatical* -----

14. Such is the humour of the *Coffee-meetings*, that that person shall gain more love and respect, who gives to the *Company* a *Suger-plum*, than he who bestows gifts more befitting men to receive, and he who hath attained the  
 \* by words. *Art of making an agreeable \* addresse to the Company*, and knows, how by empty *Complements* to flatter them into a good opinion of themselves, or to rattle to them little pleasing things, shall assuredly thereby insinuate himself into their good opinion more than if he discoursed to them of the most *Profitable Subjects* with the deepest *Judgment*.

15. Very critical and very discerning is the *Assembly* here. The *Company* within a very short while will look thorow and thorow the *Prudentest* and most *cryd-up Person*. A *Weak* part will quickly be found in him, and not only *Real* but *Imaginary Faults* will be laid to his charge. A *Man of Reputation* is so tender a *Creature*, that he should in a manner alwayes keep within doors, and never come into the *Air*, unlets chosen, and cleer. But by all means let him beware of the *Coffee-house*, for here there is alwayes a thick *smoak*, which will fully a fair colour. In plain terms, an assiduous  
 fre-



frequenting the Coffee-house, and exposing reason, parts and estimation, by conversation, to the open view of the Society, renders them hereby first familiar, then contemptible. Here a man too late will be taught, that the most excellent Jewels, to wit, the Noblest Speculations, the Divinest Truths, the most Exquisite Fancies, the most Meritorious Actions, and the most Complacential Humours prodigally thrown away amongst a mixt number of persons, become as common, as Gold was once in *Jerusalem*, that is, as common, as Stones.

16. Such is the mixture of Persons here, that methinks I cannot better express it, than by saying, That at these Waters meet all sorts of Creatures. Hence follows the Production of diverse monstrous Opinions and Absurdities. Here is a congress of old *Rome* and of new, of *Turky*, *Geneva*, and *Amsterdam*. A Coffee-house, like Logick, the Lawyer, and the Switzer, will maintain any Cause.

17. Infinite are the Contests, irreconcilable the Differences here. The Society hath been divided about the manner of the creeping of a Louse. Were there not here, a constant contention amongst the Elements of this Body, it could not subsist. *For should all agree, and be of one Judgment, they would as it were become but one Person, the House would be solitary, and at last one or two Persons would be the whole Company.*

18. However, though it resemble *Amsterdam*, being divided into innumerable different Opinions, yet is it free from effects of Sediton or War. For there are no bloody Challenges here made, much less Duels fought, or Blows given. Will you know the reason? The Company in this are more Couragious than wise, that they contend about trifles only, but they are more Wise than couragious, in that they fight not for the Victory: so that in a true sense the Lion and the Lamb ly down together here.

19. Such being the differences of Opinion, and such the Tameness of the Company, how can any one in reason, think, that a Coffee-house is dangerous to the Government, that seeds of Sedition are here sown, & Principles of Liberty insinuated? A Coffee-house hath alwayes been as great a friend to Monarchy, as an Enemy to Liberty. The Principles of a Popular Government at the *Rota* were weakn'd, and rendred contemptible. Men of such Contrary Judgments as here meet, cannot justly be feared to Agree in a Conspiracy. And in truth they talk too much, to be lookt on as dangerous, and active Persons.

20. Rather say the Fanaticks, that this is not a place in which a great and generous Truth can be maintain'd, that a Person full of such a Truth, not being able to contain it, is forc'd to whisper it in the ear of some Ingenuosus, if he can find such a one. This is certain, that who ever intends here to discourse of Worthy Subjects judiciously, ought carefully not only to chuse his Time, but to pack the Company, that so he may be heard but with patience.

21. On the other side, who ever is troubled with impertinent Fancies and ridiculous Notions, is here quietly heard and sometimes heranged. The Relater hereof hath heard a young Gentleman affirm, that he used to go to the Coffee-house purposely to vent his strange and wild Conceits, and to rid himself of such bad Guests. An opinion, how foolish or fond soever, here receives entertainment. To this Coast, as to the *West-Indies*, you carry not rich Merchandises to Trade with, but only Beads, Looking-glasses, Knives, and such like, nor shall the Merchant make returns of any other Commodities, than such as are fit for the Pedlars box.

22. Though the Coffee-house may be condemned for ill choice of subjects, on which they discourse, yet are the Company by many persons commended for this, that every one of them

them abounds in his own sense, and submits to the reason of no other Mortal, following herein that great Example of the Men who inhabit the Lunary World, who put the Monsieur in a Cage, for discoursing like a Parrat in the words of *Aristotle*. Every one over Coffee discourseth those things, which his own reason or fancy inspire him with, and he, who cants in the terms of *Aristotle*, or argues by Book, is lookt on to want terms and reason of his own, & *jurare in verba Magistri*.

23. Yet here being neither Moderators, nor Rules, (were there no other reason) a Man shall as soon fill a Quart Pot with Discourse, as Profit by it. He may as rationally expect to carry a Ship from the River of *Thames* to the *East-Indies* without a Pilot or Rules of Navigation, as to manage a discourse successively, or in this School to bring it to a good Issue.

24. A School it is without a Master. Education is here taught without Discipline. Learning (if it be possible) is here insinuated without Method. Good Manners and commendable Humors are here infused into Men by the contemplation of the Deformity of their contrarie's, as the *Spartas* infused into their Children hatred of Drunkenness by setting before them their drunken Helors.

25. The Company, (that their intertainment man appear in its native colours) at times divert themselves with the controverting such points as these.

*Utrum corpus est immateriale.*

*Utrum chimæra bombinans in vacuo possit comedere secundas intentiones.*

*Utrum antiqua Roma a Christianis fundata fuit.*

*Utrum bestia honoranda sit.*

26. A facetious or merry Story is preferred by the Gentlemen here before a Banquet of Philosophy. The Auditors listen

listen to him, who tells a Tale gracefully, with as great an attention, as *Orpheus* his Beasts did to his Charming Musick. And good reason such a person should be attentively heard.

----- *nam quæ comædia ? Mimus*

*Quis melior ?*

One relates he took thirty and three thousand Pipes of Tobacco in one night. He tickles the Auditors. They laugh heartily. Another informs the Company, that the night before having swallow'd a vast quantity of Ale, he slinkt home, and crept into Bed, and that in the midst of the night he was wak'd by an Alarm made in his Guts by reason of an Insurrection therein. Hereupon he riseth to expel the Rebel, but his weighty A---- being too ponderous for an earthen Chamber-pot to bear, the Pot broke, and his A--- unluckily fell on the bedighted ground. At this Story the Company laugh *magore cachinno*.

Here I at present stop, having run (methinks) a long race in dirty way, concluding with *Juvenal*,

*Aspice quid faciunt commercia-----*

An Apology to those Ingenuous Persons, who frequent the Coffee-house, for this description.

**T**He Describer knows, there are several Virtuosi and Ingenuosi, resort to the Coffee-house, whom, he hath the honour to be acquainted with, others are his Friends. Yet all the Elements here being confusedly mixt, this House appears to him as a meer Chaos, so that (in contemplating it) he cannot prefer even Light before Darknes, not being here separated or distinguishable one from another, amidst confusion it self.

*Verbum sat.*

FINIS.

